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Peacebuilding Commission

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Summary record of the 3rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 12 September 2007, at 10 a.m.

Temporary Chairperson: Ms. Gallardo Hernández ..... (El Salvador)
Chairperson: Mr. Takasu ..... (Japan)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Election of the Chairperson

Statement by the Chairperson

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07-50246 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda (PBC/2/OC/4)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Election of the Chairperson

2. **The Temporary Chairperson**, noting that Mr. Oshima (Japan), the former Chairperson of the Commission, had departed from New York, said it was her understanding that the candidacy of Mr. Takasu, the new Permanent Representative of Japan, for the position of Chairperson of the Commission had been endorsed by the Committee members.

3. *Mr. Takasu (Japan) was elected Chairperson of the Commission by acclamation.*

4. *Mr. Takasu (Japan) took the Chair.*

Statement by the Chairperson

5. **The Chairperson**, having emphasized his personal commitment as well as that of his Government to achieving the objectives of the Commission as set forth in General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), requested members' cooperation in continuing their joint endeavour. One year after its establishment as part of the United Nations reform process, the Commission was at an important juncture. It must respond to the high expectations of the international community by making a concerted effort to meet peacebuilding needs around the world and producing tangible results on the ground. The credibility and authority of the Commission would depend to a great extent on how it proceeded henceforward.

6. The United Nations peacebuilding architecture was now in place: the Peacebuilding Commission, consisting of the Organizational Committee and the country-specific configurations, together with integrated peacebuilding strategies as its tools of engagement and the Working Group on Lessons Learned; the Peacebuilding Fund, for which more than 60 per cent of pledged funds had been received to date, and its advisory group; and the Peacebuilding Support Office. Each of those elements must function effectively so that the intended goals could be fulfilled in a coherent and coordinated manner. The Organizational Committee played a pivotal role in ensuring such coherence and coordination, with a view to mobilizing all the relevant actors to prevent the recurrence of armed conflict. Shortcomings must be identified and remedied.

7. Special efforts should be made to ensure the closest possible coordination among the principal organs of the United Nations, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat, and to strengthen the relationship between those organs and the Commission. It was also essential to promote the closest possible linkage between the Commission and relevant United Nations funds and programmes, international financial institutions, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and regional banks. The Commission's role in providing overall policy guidance on the use of the Peacebuilding Fund should be further examined and utilized. In addition, the active contribution of national and international civil society organizations and academic institutions should be encouraged.

8. It was also time for the Commission to begin thinking about adding another country or countries to its agenda and to give further scrutiny to thematic or cross-cutting issues relevant to peacebuilding, such as post-conflict job creation, the rule of law and security sector reform. Job creation was particularly important in order to ensure stability in post-conflict societies and required the involvement of the private sector as well as the public sector. The work of the Organizational Committee on those issues should complement that of the country-specific configurations.

9. In his capacity as Chairperson of the Commission, he would seek to conduct candid exchanges of views with all members and with other participants and stakeholders in order to ensure the effective functioning of the Commission. He would be counting on the constructive support of all members so as to make a real difference to the plight of people in post-conflict situations.

10. **Mr. Gaspar Martins** (Angola), noting that his country had benefited directly from Japan's commitment to peace and stability, pledged his delegation's full cooperation in efforts to ensure that the work of the Commission was oriented towards achieving tangible results in countries where peacebuilding was needed.

11. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica), endorsing the Chairperson's remarks, said that the time was right for the Commission to take stock of the progress it had made thus far and the challenges which remained before it. His delegation hoped that the Organizational Committee would meet more frequently in the future to reflect on progress achieved on the ground.

12. **Mr. Kariyawasam** (Sri Lanka) said that, although the Commission was a new body, expectations of it were high because it was a product of the United Nations reform process. It had a responsibility to demonstrate that the Organization could deliver results on the ground. His delegation agreed that it was vital to ensure coherence and coordination among all the actors on the ground. The Chairperson was also right to emphasize the important role played by the Bretton Woods institutions and the need for job creation, since economic opportunities were crucial for achieving lasting peace.

13. **Mr. Majoor** (Netherlands), endorsing the Chairperson's analysis of the progress made by the Commission to date and his vision for the future, said that the Commission had carried out constructive work in its first year of operation. However, much remained to be done, in particular with regard to the strategies for Burundi and Sierra Leone, which should be finalized and implemented without delay so that people could see the impact of the Commission's work on the ground. Noting that Sierra Leone's recent elections had, on the whole, proceeded smoothly, he said that his delegation looked forward to working with that country's Government in order to achieve further progress in peacebuilding efforts.

14. **Ms. Viotti** (Brazil) said that her country shared the Chairman's vision for the future and that the success of the Commission would be judged by the results it achieved on the ground.

15. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) said that the Commission should strike a balance between the activities of the Organizational Committee and those of the country-specific configurations and that the Committee should reinvigorate its role with respect to thematic and policy issues.

16. The Commission should also be mindful of the need to coordinate and balance the role played by donors, on the one hand, with the role played by the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, on the other, in order to avoid duplication of effort. The respective roles played by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should also be discussed. Moreover, the Commission's rules of procedure and mechanisms should be further refined in order to make them better suited to the nature of its work.

17. Most importantly, the Commission, in fulfilling its mandate, must respect the principle of national ownership of the peacebuilding process and the full right of States to either consent to peacebuilding activities or to terminate them if they wished.

18. **Mr. Cabral** (Guinea-Bissau) said that, going forward, the Commission should become more action-oriented and willing to seek new paths in pursuit of its objectives. Recalling the visit by the representative of Norway to Burundi, which many Commission members had hoped would lead to an accelerated peacebuilding process and greater consensus on how to achieve that aim, he said he had been disappointed to note that the Commission had instead gone back to "business as usual". In view of the urgency of the situation in Burundi, it was incumbent on the Commission to take a more proactive approach.

19. While he agreed that it was important to respect national ownership of the peacebuilding process, he reminded members that countries which sought the Commission's help did so only because they were not capable of establishing and maintaining peace on their own. Those countries must understand that, once requested to provide assistance, the Commission had a responsibility to carry out its mandate fully and that any actions it took in that regard should not be interpreted as interference in their internal affairs. Therefore the Commission should not hesitate to seek out innovative ways to achieve its objectives and perfect its processes.

20. **Mr. Lacroix** (France) said that although the Commission had achieved much in its first year, it must do a better job of helping others understand its function in order to garner their support.

21. Looking ahead, he said the Commission should make a greater effort to foster interaction among all stakeholders and to ensure the full participation of donors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Countries receiving assistance should become more involved in the work of the Commission because they had a special responsibility for its success.

22. Recalling that the Commission had been established in order to provide better coordination and identification of gaps in actions to address post-conflict situations, as well as to focus the international community's attention on specific situations, he urged members to concentrate their efforts on achieving those goals.

23. Adding new countries to its agenda was crucial to strengthening the role of the Commission, which must be imaginative and creative in evaluating approaches and situations when presented with requests for assistance from countries emerging from conflict.

24. **The Chairperson** said that he would arrange informal consultations to discuss the issues and suggestions that had been raised.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.